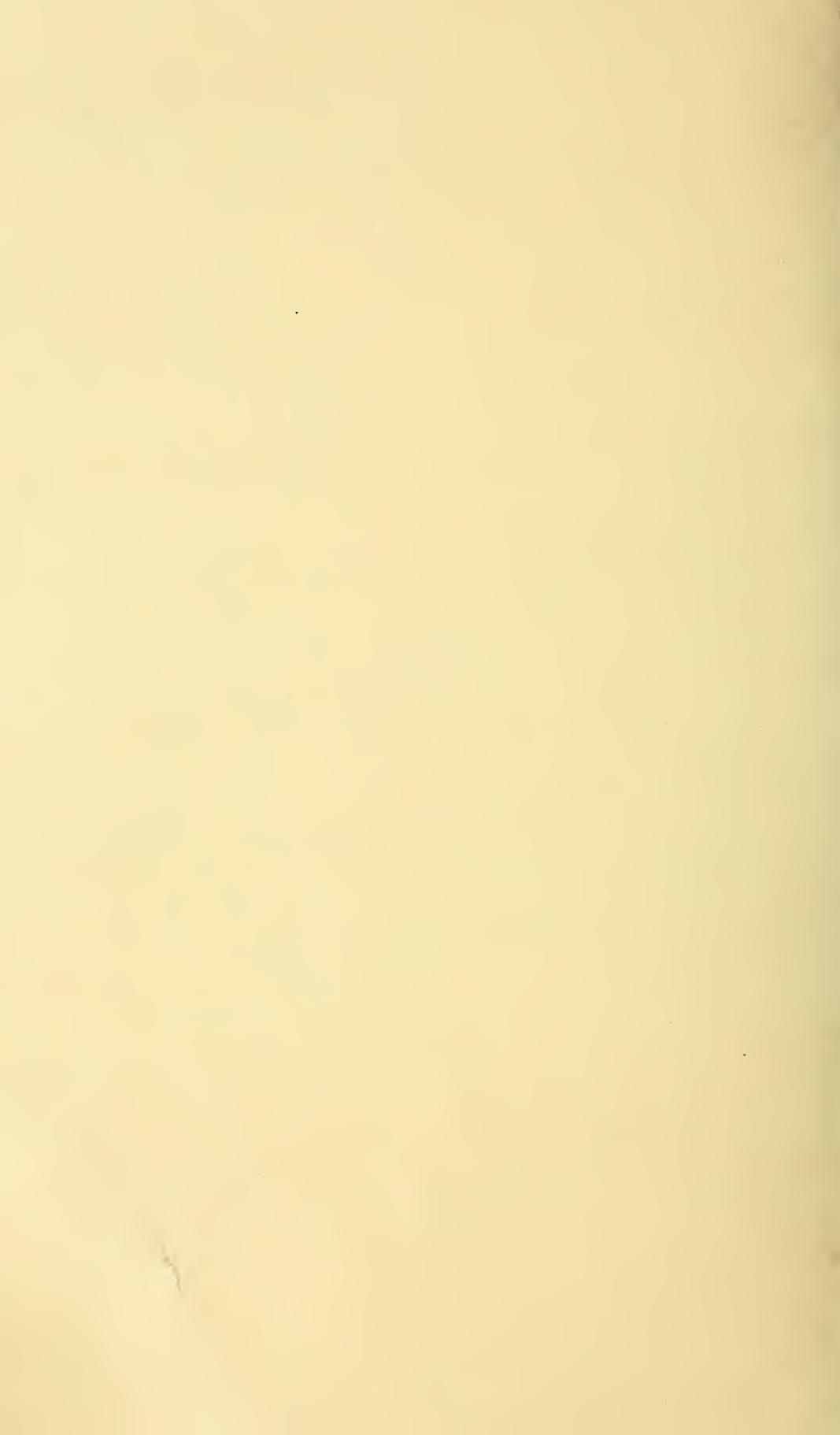


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



FREE-SEED DISTRIBUTION.

STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AT THE JOINT MEETING OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES OF AGRICULTURE, JANUARY 15, 1896.

From a special report of the Chief of the Division of Accounts and Disbursements of this Department, received December 18, I learn that only a very small part of the appropriation for this fiscal year was paid out for the services of employees in the Seed Division who were engaged until the first of October in closing up this business. The report shows that there has been used from the appropriation the following amounts:

For the purchase and distribution of valuable seeds, fiscal year 1896 (\$130,000):

1895.	To whom paid.	For what purpose.	Amount.
July 31.....	Enos S. Harnden et al.....	Salaries for July, 1895.....	\$541.30
August 31.....	Enos S. Harnden et al.....	Salaries for August, 1895.....	541.30
September 30.....	Enos S. Harnden et al.....	Salaries for September, 1895.....	527.40
	Total.....		1,610.00

For the portion thereof permitted to be used for Farmers' Bulletins, fiscal year 1896 (\$50,000):

1895.	To whom paid.	For what purpose.	Amount.
July 31.....	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for July, 1895.....	\$1,322.60
August 31.....	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for August, 1895.....	1,332.75
September 18.....	The Public Printer.....	10,000 copies Bulletin No. 7.....	98.75
September 18.....	The Public Printer.....	40,000 copies Bulletin No. 29.....	566.44
September 24.....	The Springfield Envelope Co.....	Envelopes.....	270.20
September 30.....	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for September, 1895.....	1,243.20
October 21.....	Easton & Rupp.....	Twine.....	15.00
October 24.....	The Public Printer.....	Printing Bulletin No. 30.....	164.76
October 24.....	The Public Printer.....	Printing Bulletin No. 31.....	411.62
October 31.....	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for October, 1895.....	824.70
November 15.....	The White, Corbin & Co.....	Envelopes.....	917.60
November 30.....	John Hyde et al.....	Salaries for November, 1895.....	653.00
	Total.....		7,820.62

For printing, etc., fiscal year 1896 (\$5,400):

1895.	To whom paid.	For what purpose.	Amount.
September 18.....	The Public Printer.....	Services and material July 1 to August 14, 1895.....	\$2,210.88

The above statement of expenditures shows but three items charged against "that part of the act in question which appropriates \$130,000 for the purchase of seeds for gratuitous promiscuous distribution" for the year 1896, aggregating \$1,610. These three items are, as explained above, for labor performed during the period from July 1 to September 30, 1895.

From July 1 to November 30, 1895, \$7,820.62 was paid on account of the preparation, printing and publishing of Farmers' Bulletins for the current fiscal year. It will thus be seen that of the \$130,000 appropriated for the "purchase and distribution of valuable seeds" for the fiscal year 1896, the sum of \$128,390 remains unexpended.

Finding that Farmers' Bulletins would still have to be prepared, printed, published, and distributed, "as seeds are distributed," and that this must be done by the officer provided for on the statutory roll of the "Division of Seeds" in the act making appropriation for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year

ending June 30, 1896, the Chief of this Division and a few of the persons employed therein have been continued upon this roll for the purpose of distributing these documents in accordance with the orders of Members and Delegates in Congress. This was only done after receiving the report of the "Committee on the Distribution of Publications" (Exhibit A), and certain opinions from the Comptroller of the Treasury (Exhibit B), authorizing the continuance of the expenditure for this purpose, copies of which are submitted herewith.

It only remains to state "why such seeds have not been purchased under said appropriation in accordance with existing statutes relating thereto."

Beginning in 1839 with an appropriation to the Patent Office of \$1,000 for collecting and distributing rare and improved varieties of seeds, prosecuting agricultural investigations, and procuring agricultural statistics, the appropriations for seed distribution have grown until the appropriation for the present fiscal year amounts to \$199,120, including the statutory roll for the Division of Seeds and the expenses of printing for this Division. The act says that the "Secretary of Agriculture may use not to exceed \$50,000 of the amounts herein appropriated for the preparation, printing, and publishing Farmers' Bulletins." Deducting this, the total appropriation for the purchase and distribution of seeds for the present fiscal year is \$149,120.

Down to the year 1865, the seeds distributed were purchased out of the general fund above described, so that we have no accurate information at hand with regard to the amount used for this purpose prior to that year, but since 1864 a separate appropriation has been made annually for the purpose of buying and distributing seed, as shown in the following table:

No specific appropriation for seeds was made prior to the fiscal year 1865. The appropriations were for "collection of agricultural statistics, etc., and purchase, etc., of seeds."

Year.	Appropriation.	Expenditure.	Balance.
1865	\$61,000.00	\$61,000.00	.....
1866	70,165.90	70,165.90	.....
1867	115,200.00	115,200.00	.....
1868	85,200.00	85,200.00	.....
1869	20,000.00	20,000.00	.....
1870	20,000.00	18,981.33	\$1,018.67
1871	30,000.00	28,865.17	1,134.83
1872	45,000.00	45,000.00	.....
1873	55,000.00	55,000.00	.....
1874	65,000.00	64,904.89	95.11
1875	95,000.00	94,719.83	280.17
1876	65,000.00	65,000.00	.....
1877	85,000.00	80,000.00	5,000.00
1878	75,000.00	74,579.33	420.67
1879	75,000.00	75,000.00	.....
1880	75,000.00	75,000.00	.....
1881	102,160.31	102,157.48	2.83
1882	100,000.00	99,991.53	8.47
1883	80,000.00	80,000.00	.....
1884	75,000.00	74,986.48	13.52
1885	100,000.00	99,983.82	16.18
1886	100,000.00	99,980.24	19.76
1887	100,000.00	99,998.37	1.63
1888	103,000.00	102,587.55	412.45
1889	104,200.00	104,168.73	31.27
1890	104,200.00	104,174.55	25.45
1891	105,400.00	105,090.94	309.06
1892	105,400.00	104,920.35	479.65
1893	135,400.00	134,908.27	491.73
1894	135,400.00	119,664.90	15,735.10
1895	165,400.00	120,445.15	44,954.85
1896	185,400.00	14,312.80	171,087.20
Total.	2,837,526.21	2,595,987.61	241,538.60

The figures for 1895 include \$35,400 appropriated and \$30,567.99 expended for Farmers' Bulletins and printing, while those for 1896 include \$55,400 appropriated and \$12,702.80 expended for the same purposes. The expenditures for 1896 are for the period from July 1, 1895, to December 31, 1895, inclusive.

This enormous purchase and distribution of seeds, costing the Government \$2,581,674.81 in twenty years, was made under section 527 of the Revised Statutes. This section reads as follows:

The purchase and distribution of seed by the Department of Agriculture shall be confined to such seeds as are rare and uncommon to the country, or such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another; and the purchase or propagation and distribution of trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings shall be confined to such as are adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interest of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States.

Every annual appropriation act has read "For the purchase, propagation, and distribution, *as required by law*, of valuable seeds," etc.

Under this statute the Commissioner of Patents, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Department of Agriculture for 56 years have sought "such seeds as are rare and uncommon to the country, or such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another" in all foreign countries and in all parts of this country, and have purchased freely almost every seed or plant that offered the slightest appearance of novelty or prospect of value and have distributed them most liberally through Members and Delegates in Congress.

Through our representatives all foreign countries have been searched and through our own seed growers and horticulturists the resources of our own country have been completely canvassed. The law has always been construed most broadly, and the money expended most liberally.

When the present Secretary of Agriculture came into office, he directed that lists be made of all the seeds, plants, shrubs, vines, etc., which had been distributed to parts of our country in all the years previous, and that, guided by these lists, the Seed-Purchasing Agent should deliberately proceed to find such seeds, plants, shrubs, vines, etc., as had not been previously liberally distributed in all parts of our country. Through the aid of the State Department and its agents in foreign countries, every part of the world has contributed its share for the distribution of seeds and plants which promised to be of value to our people. Great pains were taken thus to find genuinely new, useful, and valuable things "rare and uncommon to the country and adapted to general cultivation, or to promote the general interest of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States," and they were carefully distributed to every portion of the country where there was the slightest hope that they might prove useful. In this way it became each year more and more difficult to get things which came up to the requirement of the law. The tremendous pressure for quantity to supply Congress has led to the purchase of seeds, etc., on very imperfect evidence as to novelty and value. During recent years, therefore, the seeds obtained were of very doubtful value to the people of the country. Experience has shown that the vast majority of the so-called new seeds and plants offered by seedsmen or horticulturists are merely old varieties under new names. The distribution has, therefore, become very disappointing and unsatisfactory, growing necessarily more and more so as it was continued, extended in area, and increased in volume.

This was the necessary logical result of such a distribution under this law. There are only a certain number of rare and uncommon seeds, or useful or valuable trees, shrubs, vines, etc., in the world, and their collection and distribution cannot, therefore, be continued indefinitely. In fact, the more carefully and zealously the collection and distribution is made, the earlier must it come to a conclusion. For many years the purchases of seed by this Department were only possible under the very liberal construction of the broad provision for "such seeds as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another." During recent years almost no seed rare or uncommon to this country has been found by this Department anywhere in the world. The distribution during the last three years was kept up, therefore, through great difficulty and with growing doubt as to its legality. Every seed that could be found anywhere offering a

reasonable prospect of usefulness in any portion of the country has been purchased and liberally distributed.

The extent and liberality of the distribution which has been made by the present Secretary of Agriculture will be shown by the following figures, taken from the reports of the Seed Division. During the three fiscal years July 1, 1889, to July 1, 1892, under his predecessor in office, there were distributed the following:

	Kinds.	Varieties.	Packages to Congressmen.	Total packages distributed.
July 1, 1889, to June 30, 1890	23	520	4,459,778	5,605,246
July 1, 1890, to June 30, 1891	22	413	4,157,931	6,013,613
July 1, 1891, to June 30, 1892	20	426	4,542,177	5,932,989
Total, 1889 to 1892.....	65	1,355	13,159,886	17,551,848

For the three fiscal years between July 1, 1892, to July 1, 1895:

	Kinds.	Varieties.	Packages to Congressmen.	Total packages distributed.
July 1, 1892, to June 30, 1893	18	387	6,215,781	7,704,943
July 1, 1893, to June 30, 1894	25	309	8,385,120	9,555,318
July 1, 1894, to June 30, 1895	25	288	7,209,089	9,528,653
Total, 1892 to 1895.....	68	984	21,809,990	26,788,914
Increase for last period.....	3	.....	8,650,104	9,237,066

In the three years of his term of office, the present Secretary had distributed to Members of Congress 8,650,104 packages more than did his predecessor in office. In doing this he believes that he went to the utmost limit of the authority given him in the statute.

Under the old plan, which prevailed in this Department before this year, the noncompetitive offers of seedsmen and horticulturists were sifted, and the most reliable and promising varieties were taken upon the representations of their producers as to their rarity and value. The fact is, that the people in every portion of this country have, through the instrumentalities of this Department and our enterprising seedsmen, already secured nearly all the vegetable and field seeds, plants, trees, etc., that are well adapted to their peculiar soils and climate.

After testing the seed purchased in this way in the last three years in the field and in the garden, our correspondents and the experiment stations assure us that very few of them are really rare, uncommon, or specially valuable.

At least one-half of the so-called new varieties sent to any particular section of the country have proved comparatively unsuitable and often worthless, while the other half proved to be old varieties already well known there. Although diligently carried out, the seed distribution of the last three years has thus been extremely unsatisfactory to the people of the country as well as to this Department. By inducing interested people to spend their labor upon things that were represented to be new, but proved either common or unsuitable, the Government has imposed upon them, and has been the occasion of no little loss of the rent of land, money, time, and labor of the people.

New varieties of seeds and plants where there are any can be obtained at the present much more readily by skilled, practical botanists and horticulturists than by this Department, and it is a fact that when such commercial agencies find anything new, they are not apt to sell it to the Department of Agriculture at any price. A single year's free distribution ends their trade in it. On the other hand it is generally stated and believed that unscrupulous dealers make a business of selling the Department of Agriculture their old seeds and their surplus stock of failures.

The Department of Agriculture has no farm or other arrangement for testing the real value of so-called rare and uncommon plants, and could not do so for all sections of the country if it had.

Being thoroughly convinced that the end of the legitimate purchase and distribution of seeds under the law, as cited, had been reached, and perhaps far passed, and being entirely unable to find any seed which would come up to its requirements by the methods which had been pursued in the past, namely, by correspondence with seedsmen and inquiries through the representatives of the State Department abroad, the Secretary of Agriculture, on the 18th of April, 1895, addressed a communication to the Honorable Attorney-General of the United States, a copy of which, with his reply, is inclosed herewith, in which he asked for an opinion as to whether (1) "The Secretary of Agriculture can legally purchase any other seeds than those described in Section 527 of the Revised Statutes," and whether (2) "It would be proper and lawful for the Secretary of Agriculture *** to advertise for proposals to furnish the Department of Agriculture with seeds, bulbs, trees, vines, cuttings, and plants," etc., in accordance with Section 3709 of the Revised Statutes, which requires that "All purchases and contracts for supplies or services in any of the Departments of the Government, except for personal services, shall be made by advertising a sufficient time previously for proposals respecting the same," etc.

The reply of the Attorney-General informed the Secretary of Agriculture that (1) "The seeds purchasable under the act of March 2, 1895, are limited to those described in section 527 of the Revised Statutes—there being no reasonable ground for claiming that the act of March 2, 1895, operates, or was intended to operate, as a repeal of the earlier statute;" (2) that, "If not obligatory upon the Secretary of Agriculture to purchase seeds, trees, etc., conformably to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes, it is certainly competent for him to make the purchases conformably to said statute, the right to reject any and all bids being reserved," etc.

In accordance with this construction, the Secretary of Agriculture immediately caused an advertisement for seeds, plants, trees, etc., stating the requirements of the Department of Agriculture in the language of the Statute itself, to be published in the lawful number of papers, and to be mailed to all the seedsmen, horticulturists, and others whose addresses were on file in this Department.

Since the act of Congress requires "that the seeds allotted to the Senators and Representatives for distribution in the districts embraced within the twenty-fifth and thirty-second parallels of latitude shall be ready for delivery on the 10th day of January, or at the earliest practicable time thereafter," and since all Representatives expect their seeds to be ready early in February in order that they may be forwarded to the people in time for their early gardens, it was necessary to stipulate in this advertisement that all seeds should be delivered in Washington on or before the 1st of November. Under the well-known rule of moving the seed from one section of the country to another, those grown in the extreme North are frequently desired for planting in the extreme South. This arrangement gave the Department only from seventy to one hundred days in which to clean, test, sort, pack, and label the seed for distribution to Members of Congress, therefore it was not considered possible under the law to grant a longer time for delivery of the seed.

In order that the Department might treat their bids intelligently, it was required that the "persons submitting bids should specify the kind and varieties, with full description of each variety of seeds and plants upon which they desire to submit bids and the quantities they are prepared to contract for," etc. The bids were to be received by the Secretary of Agriculture until 2 p. m., July 1, 1895.

On July 1, the Secretary appointed Messrs. E. S. Harnden, F. L. Evans, and J. B. Bennett, of the Department of Agriculture, "a board to open and examine bids for supplying the United States Department of Agriculture during the fiscal year 1896 with 'seeds,'" etc., as required by law, in accordance with this advertise-

ment (Exhibit —). This board opened and carefully examined the bids which had been received at the appointed time. They found only three which, in form, came up to the requirements of the advertisement. These bids are submitted herewith, together with the indorsements of the board thereon, and the final report of the board.

Messrs. Peter Henderson & Co. offer roses, cannae, "flower seed novelties and specialties in vegetable seeds," and two kinds of grass seeds. The board found that their bid was deficient in description; that the flower and vegetable seeds offered were not rare; and that the only farm or field seeds offered were two grasses. These were referred to the Agrostologist of the Department of Agriculture, who submitted the following opinion with regard to them:

Bromus inermis, awnless brome-grass, was fully described and its agricultural characters and value pointed out in German publications more than a hundred years ago. It was frequently mentioned in English agricultural works in the early years of the present century. It was introduced into this country nearly twelve years ago. It has been widely grown in this country experimentally, and the seed has been offered for sale by our leading seedsmen for a number of years.

Cynodon dactylon. Bermuda or wire grass. This grass is very widely distributed in tropical and subtropical countries throughout the world, and has been known since prehistoric times. In the parts of this country where this grass is most valuable, it is known to almost every man, woman, and child, either as a weed or good hay or pasture grass. The cotton planters of the South look upon this grass as one of the very worst of weeds. The grass is best propagated by root cuttings or sets.

The vegetable seeds offered in this bid were all such as the Department had previously distributed, and could not, therefore, be called rare or uncommon in the opinion of the board. Nothing was offered that was "adapted to general cultivation or to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States." This bid was, therefore, rejected as a whole.

The next bid was that of J. C. Vaughan, of Chicago. He offers a number of "rare and useful flower seeds" (to quote his language) and three varieties of vegetable seeds. The flower seed include such things as "Giant Paris Pansy" at \$25 per pound; "Lobelia Erinus," \$35 per pound; "New Double Morning Glory," \$40 per pound; "White Branching Aster," \$36 per pound; "Chinese Primroses," \$60 per pound; "Petunia White Star," \$65 per pound, and "Chabaud Carnation," at \$128 per pound. The board appears to have promptly decided that the flower seeds at these prices were not "adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States." The three varieties of vegetable seeds offered were "New Mangel, Erfurt Model;" "Turnip, New Scarlet Kashmry;" and "New Victoria Spinach." The board reported that these "are not new, rare, or unique." The bid was also deficient in that the quantity of each that could be supplied was not mentioned. It is likely that a confession that they had a large quantity of the above flower seed at the above prices would render it impossible for them to sell any of them.

The bid of Messrs. J. M. Thornburn & Co., of New York, includes a variety of vegetable, but only three specimens of field or farm seeds, viz: Havana Tobacco seed, Bermuda Grass seed, and 25 bushels No. 1 Wheat, "by parentage half wheat, half rye, at \$3 per bushel."

This bid was found deficient in descriptive matter; the varieties are not new or rare; every kind and variety of seed mentioned in it, with the exception of eleven items out of 65 offered, have already been distributed by this Department, and of these eleven items none are stated to be rare or uncommon. It was, therefore, rejected also.

This entire lot of bids, although it includes many high-priced flower seed and so-called new varieties of kitchen garden plants, thus includes only four kinds of field or farm seed, viz: Brome grass, Bermuda grass, and Havana tobacco, and one variety of wheat. Two bidders offer the Bermuda grass, or wire grass, seed. The total amounts of field seed offered were as follows:

4,000 pounds awnless-brome grass seed, at 14 cents per pound.....	\$560
500 pounds Bermuda, or wire grass, seed, at 80 cents per pound.....	400
300 pounds Bermuda, or wire grass, seed, at 8 cents per pound.....	300
100 pounds Havana tobacco seed, at \$1.50 per pound.....	150
25 bushels or 1,500 pounds Carman, No. 1 wheat, "by parentage half wheat, half rye," at 5 cents per pound.....	75
	225
6,400 pounds.....	1,485

This would under the law have been less than ten pounds of field and farm seed to each Senator, Representative, and Delegate in Congress if every pound offered had been bought.

Having received no bids that came up to the requirements of the statutes and offered anything worthy of consideration the board rejected them all and submitted the following report :

THE HONORABLE,
THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

Washington, D. C., July 6, 1895.

SIR: The undersigned board appointed by you on July 1, 1895, to open and examine bids for seeds to be furnished this Department for distribution according to law, during the fiscal year ending July 1, 1896, have the honor to report that we have opened and examined the bids received and find that the same do not meet the requirements of the advertisement as printed, and, therefore, respectfully recommend that all bids be rejected.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed)

ENOS S. HARNDEN.

F. L. EVANS.

J. B. BENNETT.

In accordance with the instructions of the resolution I have the honor to submit herewith, also, copies of all bids or offers of seeds made to this Department in response to its advertisement dated April 27, 1895, or otherwise submitted for its consideration, together with copies of each letter sent to this Department relative to or asking any information concerning or modification of the proposals issued and its reply thereto (Exhibit E). These include all bids which were found deficient in description or otherwise failed to come up to the conditions of the advertisement. In the hope of finding something that would come up to the requirement of the statute the board informally examined all of these bids and made their indorsements upon them which might be "made profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another." Had any rare or uncommon seeds or plants "adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interests of horticulture or agriculture throughout the United States" been found, they would have been purchased under the "emergency" plan.

The indorsements of the board show that in the entire list of informal bids and offers no rare or uncommon seeds or plants "adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States" were to be found. In almost every case the offers were of old and well-known things at very extravagant prices. The bids that were received after the 1st of July were also informally examined and nothing was found in them which came within the purport of the statute.

The offer of Mr. C. F. Carpenter, of Bartow, Fla., to furnish one hundred pounds of "teosinte" being of slight novelty, was referred to the Agrostologist of the Department for his consideration with regard to its character under the statutes and its value for general cultivation. This officer reported as follows:

Teosinte.—Illustrated and described in the American Agriculturist for January, 1880, at which time reports were being received in England from a number of its colonies, including the Bahamas and the West Indies, generally South and tropical Africa, and Australia, relative to its growth in these countries. It was noticed in the Southern Cultivator in 1879, and has been repeatedly mentioned in the Southern agricultural journals since that date. Seed was distributed from this Department in 1886, and has been advertised for sale by our leading seedsmen for a number of years past. Teosinte is a subtropical American grass, and has been grown successfully in many parts of the extreme South. It does not mature elsewhere.

It is to be specially noted that none of the bids, either formally or informally made, in connection with the advertisement of the Department of April 27, 1895, or the offers made to this Department in correspondence contain any proposals to supply trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings "adapted to general cultivation, and to promote the general interests of horticulture and agriculture throughout the United States." Seeds of some such things were offered, but no plants or cuttings were offered by any one. It appears, therefore, that the horticulturists of the country have distributed these things so thoroughly through their regular agencies that nothing of this kind remains to be done by this Department. No plants or cuttings were purchased, therefore, for distribution this year.

As soon as it had been fully ascertained that no seeds, trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings could be obtained for distribution this fiscal year, a brief circular announcing the fact was published and mailed to all persons interested. This circular contains the opinion of the Attorney-General of the United States, the advertisement and the report of the board. It announces in conclusion that in consideration of the failure of the Department to get any seeds or plants under section 527, Revised Statutes, and by the method laid down in section 3709, Revised Statutes, the Seed Division would be abolished with the exception of as many persons connected therewith as would be needed to prepare and distribute Farmers' Bulletins. A copy of this circular is inclosed herewith marked Exhibit G.

ADDENDA.

As an evidence of the fact that recipients of seeds, whether supplied upon the orders of Congressmen or directly from the Department, regarded them simply as a free gift it may be cited that not one in one thousand made any report whatever of the results obtained from the planting of the seed, notwithstanding that all seed sent was accompanied with an explicit request by the Department for such a report. This experience is not that of the present administration only, for, referring to the reports of Chiefs of the Seed Division in former years, complaint is made to the same effect with a statement in some cases that special efforts were put forth to secure a fair average of reports, but without success.

Another remarkable feature of these reports is that no one of them, for several years at least, has pointed out *a single instance of benefit accruing to agriculture from this seed distribution*. So patent was this omission in the reports furnished during Gen. Rusk's administration that while the work of every other division is generally, sometimes highly, commended, not a single reference is to be found in three out of the four reports he presented as to the work of this Division or the subject of seed distribution.

Of the few reports received during the years 1893, 1894, 1895, and 1896 all were so vague and indefinite, in a word, so manifestly perfunctory, as to give no valuable experimental results or information whatever. It may be safely asserted, from all the evidence available in the Department, that for the \$1,100,000 and over expended for seed distribution by the Department in the past ten years no visible practical benefit to general agriculture or horticulture has resulted.

So well is this understood by those who have had occasion to give attention to the matter that not one of the hundreds of papers mostly agricultural, received at the Department has ever printed a single word commendatory of the distribution, while many of them have persistently ridiculed it, and most of them have earnestly condemned it. Grange associations and their officers and other agricultural bodies have adopted resolutions to the same effect.

Should it, however, be deemed wise and expedient to reinstitute the gratuitous distribution of seed at the public expense, the Department should not be made a depot and packing house, but all seed should be purchased already put up in packets and properly labeled by seedsmen. The room required for packing and the skilled labor is not available in the Department, and putting up seed can be made to cost, by the seedsmen themselves, 50 per cent less than it has heretofore cost the Government.